

# Willow Wood Community Primary School

Bradbury Road, Wharton, Winsford, CW7 3HN

**Inspection dates** 11–12 July 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are below average in most classes and by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Not all pupils, particularly those in Year 1 and Year 3, are making quick enough gains in their learning to make up for lost ground in the past.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is lagging behind improvements in reading and writing. Some pupils lack the mathematical language to help them shape their ideas and explain their work.
- The progress of some pupils is hindered by weak spelling and handwriting skills.
- Teaching is not consistently good on a day-to-day basis because teachers do not always pitch pupils' activities at the right level.
- The teaching of early reading is variable. This prevents some pupils from gaining a full understanding of the sounds that letters make.
- Not all leaders and managers provide enough expert guidance to reduce differences in teaching.
- The governing body relies too heavily on the headteacher to provide information about the school. They do not provide enough challenge about teachers' performance to ensure pay rewards are linked to successful outcomes.

### The school has the following strengths

- Good leadership by the headteacher has brought staff together and implemented improvements to teaching and pupils' achievement so the school is no longer inadequate.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved and is now good. They feel safe and enjoy school. Their positive attitudes to learning and their desire to succeed make a valuable contribution to their improving achievement.
- Teachers' marking is thorough and helps pupils know the steps they need to take to reach their goals.
- Vigorous checks on teaching mean teachers are in no doubt about what is expected and what they need to do to improve.
- The creative curriculum is shaped well to pupils' needs and interests and provides a range of exciting learning opportunities.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 20 lessons taught by 13 teachers. Three of these lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. The inspectors also made shorter visits to classrooms to observe the teaching of reading and to check the progress made by disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs in the mainstream classes.
- Inspectors observed and spoke with pupils during lessons and at play and lunchtime. They met formally with two groups of pupils and heard pupils read.
- Meetings were held with staff, senior leaders and managers, members of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including arrangements for safeguarding, information about pupils' attainment and progress and pupils' books.
- Inspectors spoke informally to a small group of parents at the start of the school day. They also took account of the 19 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to inform the inspection.
- Inspectors also considered the responses from 32 staff questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Joanne Olsson, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Hilary Ward

Additional Inspector

Robert Pye

Additional Inspector

## Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

### Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is lower than found nationally and few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is more than twice the national average. (The pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government for pupils who are known to be eligible for free schools meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs supported at school action is above average. A larger than average proportion of pupils have a statement of educational needs or have extra support because they have been identified as school action plus.
- The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs. This provision is aimed at pupils in Key Stage 2 who have complex learning needs. There are currently nine pupils accessing this provision.
- The school does not meet the government's floor standards (these are the minimum standards and rate of progress expected of primary pupils).
- There is a Children's Centre adjacent to the school site. This is not managed by the governing body and is subject to a separate inspection. The latest report is available on the Ofsted website.
- Plans are in place for the school to convert to Academy status in January 2014.
- When the school was inspected in May 2012, its overall effectiveness was judged inadequate and it was given a notice to improve. The monitoring inspection in December 2012 deemed the school to be making satisfactory progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on recent improvements so that all teaching is good or better on a day-to-day basis by:
  - ensuring teachers plan activities which are always pitched at the right level for every pupil in their class
  - ensuring teachers provide enough challenge so that they quickly move pupils' learning on when it is clear pupils have confidently grasped new skills and knowledge
  - reviewing the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) so all pupils have enough opportunity to practise new learning to help them spell, read and write with greater accuracy
  - making sure teachers have a consistent approach to helping pupils tackle written and mental calculations so that older pupils are able to use the most efficient methods of calculation to solve problems.
- Further improve pupils' achievement, particularly in Year 1 and Year 3, so all pupils are able to make up lost ground and reach the levels expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - tackling weaknesses in pupils' spelling and handwriting skills
  - ensuring pupils gain key mathematical language to help them think through their ideas and

explain their thoughts

- providing more opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects.

■ Improve leadership and management, particularly governance, by:

- helping members of the governing body to gain their own view of the school's performance by collecting first-hand evidence during their visits to the school
- ensuring governors offer appropriate challenge to senior leaders to check pay rewards are always linked to teachers' performance and pupils' achievement
- undertaking an external review of governance
- ensuring all leaders provide teachers with expert guidance to iron out the remaining inconsistencies in teaching.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- The decline in standards noted at the previous inspection has been halted. Pupils' achievement is no longer inadequate because almost all pupils are making expected progress from their starting points and increasing numbers are making greater gains in their learning. For example, over half of the pupils in Year 5 have already made the progress normally expected by the time they leave Year 6. This means pupils are quickly making up lost ground brought about by weaker teaching in the past. Nonetheless, standards remain low in most classes and in some year groups, particularly Year 1 and Year 3 pupils are not catching up quickly enough.
- Children start school with skills and knowledge that are much lower than those typically expected for their age. They make good progress in the Reception class but their skills in reading, writing and mathematics remain below average by the time they start Year 1. Standards have improved by the end of Year 2 and are closer to, but still below, the national picture. Despite Year 6 pupils making good progress across the current academic year, they were unable to make up for deep-rooted underachievement in the past. This means the 2013 unvalidated results for the end of Key Stage 2 remain well below average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who access the resourced provision make good progress from their starting points. The achievement of disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs in the mainstream classes has improved and they now make similar progress to their class-mates.
- In the past, pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding lagged behind their peers by up to a year. Additional funding received from the government has been used wisely to provide a range of catch-up programmes. As a result, this group are making better progress and the attainment gap has reduced to one term. There are no differences between the achievement of pupils with English as an additional language and pupils from minority ethnic groups and other pupils in the school.
- Gaps in pupils' basic skills are being tackled successfully. Pupils are making better progress in writing because they have the tools and the opportunity to write across different subjects for sustained periods of time. Nonetheless, weaknesses in spelling and handwriting skills continue to hold some pupils back. Pupils' improving grasp of number facts mean they solve mathematical problems with greater ease. However, the progress of some pupils is hindered because they do not have the mathematical language to explain their ideas or have enough opportunity to use their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Pupils are willing workers who enjoy working in groups and sharing their ideas and success.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Vibrant classrooms and warm relationships underpin pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Lively displays celebrate pupils' achievements and promote their self-esteem. Time is used wisely and lessons are structured well so pupils have enough time to work on their own.
- Teaching is better than at the previous inspection. Nonetheless, it requires improvement because not all teaching is good enough on a day-to-day basis. Although teachers are more skilled at using information about pupils' starting points to plan different activities, these are not always pitched at the right level to meet the wide range of needs in each class. Sometimes, teachers do not push pupils on quickly enough when it is clear they have grasped a new skill or idea.
- Some adults are very talented at helping younger pupils to gain early reading skills. However, in some reading sessions, the pace of learning is too slow; opportunities to model handwriting are missed and inappropriate use of worksheets act as a barrier to pupils' success. Nevertheless, a whole-school focus on reading is bearing fruit. The use of 'real books' to underpin English teaching means pupils know a wider range of authors and are beginning to show greater flair in

their own writing. Activities, such as the Reading Club and 'Extreme Reading', are very effective in encouraging pupils to read widely and often.

- Teachers make sure pupils' writing skills are built on as they move from class-to-class. This is less well developed in mathematics because the guidance for teaching calculation has only recently been introduced. As a result, strategies to solve problems are not always taught in a consistent way and some teachers do not insist on pupils using more efficient methods of calculation as they move through the school.
- Teaching in the resourced provision is good. This enables pupils to persevere even when they find tasks challenging.
- There is a good balance of teacher and child-led activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage and adults are very effective at helping children to explore and find things out for themselves.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They are skilled at helping less-able pupils overcome tricky points in the lesson, at prompting pupils to 'have a go' and at standing back so that pupils do not rely too heavily on adult help.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils say behaviour has improved. Inspectors agree. It is now a strength of the school. One pupil commented: 'Adults do not shout, but listen carefully to both sides of the story to sort out any problems.' Behaviour is consistently well managed. Pupils behave well in all areas of the school because they know the rules, they have positive attitudes to learning and they are increasingly good at managing their own behaviour. As a result, adults do not need to intervene. School records confirm behaviour is improving over time and learning is rarely disrupted.
- Different groups of pupils say they feel safe. They have a good, common sense approach to keeping themselves safe because they learn about managing the risks they may come across outside of school.
- Pupils say there is occasional name-calling but that bullying is not tolerated in their school. Pupils know about different types of bullying and are increasingly aware that homophobic name-calling is as unacceptable as racist comments.
- Although attendance rates are below average, they are improving faster than the national picture. The school has been successful in reducing the number of pupils who miss large chunks of their schooling and more pupils arrive at school in time to start their lessons.
- Most of the parents who responded to the online survey agreed that pupils are happy and safe at the school and that behaviour is good. A few felt bullying was not dealt with effectively. School records show there are few incidents of reported bullying and there are effective systems in place to keep pupils safe.

### **The leadership and management requires improvement**

- The calm but authoritative headteacher has been instrumental in turning the school around. She has the confidence and respect of staff. Pupils sing her praises because she has placed their interests firmly at the heart of the school.
- Senior leaders have risen to the challenge and are fully involved in driving improvement and checking to see their work is making a difference to teaching. Middle leaders are developing as a cohesive team to improve subjects other than English and mathematics. Nonetheless, not all leaders are providing enough expert guidance to iron out remaining differences in teaching.
- Strong leadership of the resourced based provision and special educational needs in mainstream classes has led to these pupils making greater gains in their learning.
- The systems to manage the performance of teachers have been overhauled. They are thorough and effective. Expectations of teachers are high and pay rewards are linked to the positive difference teachers are making to pupils' achievements. Checks on teaching are frequent. Teachers receive clear targets to help them improve and training is carefully matched to

individual need. As a result, inadequate teaching is rare and more teaching is good.

- Excellent use is made of data to pinpoint different groups of pupils who are not doing as well as they should for their age. Achievement gaps are narrowing because these pupils receive extra help to get them back on track. This positive improvement, along with very few incidents of harassment mean the school is stronger in tackling discrimination and promoting equality.
- Highly effective support from the local authority has helped teachers update their skills, developed governors' understanding of their role and aided senior leaders to keep track of the school's progress.
- The curriculum is good. This is because pupils have a say in what they want to learn and subjects are creatively linked to meet their needs and interests. Skills and knowledge are built on as pupils move from class-to-class through lively topics which make learning fun and meaningful. A wide range of visits, visitors and after-school clubs mean pupils enjoy a broad range of experiences which promote their love of learning and underpin their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, Year 5 pupils talked with pride about their recent performance with the Halle Orchestra.
- Much has been achieved since the previous inspection. Nonetheless, staff and governors are not content to sit back and relax. They are keen to improve further so that all pupils get the very best start at Willow Wood. This common sense of purpose and sustained improvement since the last inspection has established firm foundations on which to build future success.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - is improving because governors have sought advice and training to help them gain a better understanding of their role and to update their skills in checking data. They visit the school frequently and more governors are gaining first-hand information about teaching by visiting classrooms and talking to pupils. However, these activities are not planned well enough to help all governors gain an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, governors rely too heavily on the headteacher to provide this information.
  - is fully involved in making decisions about the pupil premium funding and governors know the difference this extra money is making to pupils' achievement. They receive clear information about teachers' performance but they are not asking enough questions to ensure pay rewards are justified. Governors ensure the school meets all safeguarding and other statutory requirements.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135256
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	408848

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	264
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Barbara Coldrick
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sue Tomlinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 May 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01606 593896
<b>Fax number</b>	01606 595400
<b>Email address</b>	admin@willowwood.cheshire.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

